



New Hampshire Senate NEWS RELEASE

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Bill providing educational aid to local communities impacted by COVID-19 and property tax relief passes the Senate

CONCORD, NH – On a vote of 24-0 vote, the Senate passed SB135, legislation allowing school districts to submit their 2019 enrollment numbers to calculate their funding level for FY22 so schools will not be penalized financially for any dips in enrollment caused by COVID-19. The bill is also being seen as a win for property taxpayers.

Prime sponsor Sen. Erin Hennessey (R-Littleton) said, “The unanimous vote by the full Senate today on SB135 is an important step in securing much-needed educational aid to our local communities impacted by COVID-19. By removing the COVID impact on our current funding formula, our schools will not be penalized financially for any dips in enrollment caused by the pandemic. I am proud to be its prime sponsor and thank all of my Senate colleagues for their support today.”

The Chairman of the Finance Committee, Sen. Gary Daniels (R-Milford), called SB135 “pro-student and pro-taxpayer.” He added, “Increasing education aid to our cities and towns means property tax relief at a time when communities are starting to write their budgets and make all of the tough financial decisions that go along with process. SB135 will help give them the clarity they need.”

Senator Bob Giuda (R-Warren) noted, “Based on the Department of Education’s analysis, SB135 would increase State Education Trust Fund expenditures and local revenues by \$45.67 million in FY 2022. That is excellent news for our schools and our property taxpayers.”

Senator Regina Birdsell (R-Hampstead) said, “Passing SB135 tells our schools districts that we support them and do not want to see them be penalized by the pandemic. The overwhelming support for this legislation shows the Senate understands the needs of our school districts and that we were willing to help make a precarious financial situation much better.”

Under SB135, the state’s Department of Education would be required to compare students’ enrollment for school year 2019-2020 (before the pandemic) to school year 2020-2021 (during the pandemic) and use the greater of the two numbers to calculate the cost of an adequate education for FY22. Since many school districts experienced decreased enrollments this school year because of COVID-19, most adequacy grants will be based on 2019 enrollment numbers. The bill also addresses any deficits in the state’s Free & Reduced Lunch Program aid calculations.